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AUTHOR Todd-Mancillas, William R.; Rossi, Ana Maria
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ABSTRACT

A study was conducted to amplify previous research efforts concerned with the identification of similarities and differences between Brazilian men's and women's managerial communication behaviors. Previous findings have indicated that, in contrast with American managers, Brazilian men and women managers were more likely to use power to resolve disputes with employees. Subjects, 40 men and 40 women in middle- and top-management positions in Porto Alegre, Brazil, were asked to read a packet of four scripts describing various problems that a manager might have with an employee or another manager of equal status as themselves. Four versions of each script were used, matching all possible combinations of men and women managers with men and women employees. (Copies of these scripts--in both English and Portuguese--are appended). After reading the scripts, the subjects were individually interviewed to determine how they would resolve the problems. Results showed that Brazilian men were more likely to use power (threats and negative sanction) when resolving disputes with female managerial-level employees, but to use communication (negotiation) when resolving disputes with male managerial-level employees. Brazilian women managers reported no preference for using communication, power, or a combination of the two in resolving conflicts, and the sex of the employee made no difference in their behavior. No such similar findings were found in an earlier study of American male and female managers. (FL)

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Additional Findings on Differences Between Brazilian Men and Women Managers in Their Managing of Conflicts with Employees

Wm. R. Todd-Mancillas

California State University, Chico

Ana Maria Rossi

University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Wm. R. Todd-Mancillas is an associate professor of Interpersonal and Instructional Communication, Department of Information and Communication Studies, California State University at Chico. Ana M. Rossi is a doctoral candidate in the Department of Speech Communication, University of Nebraska-Lincoln. This study is one of a series conducted by the authors increasing knowledge about managerial communication strategies. Specifically, this paper is a sequel to one presented during the October, 1985 annual meeting of the Organization for the Study of Communication, Language, and Gender (Lincoln, Nebraska).

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Abstract

This study amplifies previous attempts to identify similarities and differences between Brazilian men's and women's managerial communication behavior. Previous findings (Rossi & Todd-Mancillas, Note 1) indicate that, in contrast with American managers, Brazilian men and women managers appear more likely to use power to resolve disputes with employees. This study reports findings indicating that Brazilian men managers appear more likely to use power (threat and negative sanction) when resolving disputes with female managerial-level employees, but communication (negotiation) when resolving disputes with male managerial-level employees. No such similar distinction has been found among American men managers (Todd-Mancillas & Rossi, 1985). These findings are discussed in terms of cultural differences between Brazilian and American managerial societies.

Additional Findings on Differences Between Brazilian Men and Women Managers in Their Managing of Conflict with Employees

Many scholars have been concerned with comparing and constrasting communication strategies used by men and women managers. Recent research indicates consistent differences, with women managers tending to be more open, responsive, and communicative than men managers (Baird & Bradley, 1979; Rossi & Todd-Mancillas, 1985a). However, these findings have been drawn from research done on American men and women managers and, therefore, may not apply to communication differences between men and women managers in other countries.

This study attempts to increase our understanding of communication strategies used by Brazilian men and women managers. By contrasting the communication strategies of American and Brazilian managers, one may better appreciate the difference culture makes in sanctioning certain norms and communication strategies (Lannon, 1977).

The first author is a native of Brazil, with many business contacts in Porto Alegre. Accordingly, the first author was able to collect data about Brazilian men's and women's managerial communication behavior. Further, as reported previously, the authors have already collected and analyzed a large body of data

contrasting American men's and women's managerial communication when attempting to resolve disputes with subordinates (Todd-Mancillas & Rossi, 1985). For the purpose of this study, a similar data collection effort was undertaken in Porto Alegre, with 40 men and 40 women managers interviewed to identify their preferred communication strategies when attempting to resolve disputes with employees. Some of this data has already been compared with the previously collected data on American men and women managers (Rossi & Todd-Mancillas, Note 1). Thus far, these comparisons seem to indicate that there are fewer differences between Brazilian men and women managers than there are between American men and women managers. Specifically, Brazilian men and women managers seem to agree more on the use of organizational power as a preferred way to resolve disputes with subordinates; whereas, American women managers differ from American men managers in relying more on communication and negotiation as preferred means of resolving disputes wtih subordinates.

Rossi and Todd-Mancillas (1985b) have focused specifically on the question of why Brazilian women managers are (apparently) more prone to use power and less communication than American women managers. Their explanation is that in Brazil—as in many other developing and, in particular, South American countries—the predominate style of management is one patterned after machismo

culture. In machismo cultures, organizations tend to be paternalistic and managed in authoritarian fashion. Since intolerance for alternative viewpoints and reliance on punishment seem to be the cornerstones of authoritarianism (Adorno, 1950), it is not surprising that in cultures highly influenced by machismo, that one would find widespread usage of power—not communication (negotiation)—when resolving disputes with employees.

Rossi and Todd-Mancillas (1985b) give two reasons why in these cultures women would be nearly as likely as men to use power strategies. First, machismo is so pervasive and deeply ingrained in these cultures, that all cultural members (both men and women) assimilate and internalize authoritariansim as a preferred managerial style. Second, in order to advance in an organization one usually models the behavior of those more successful than self. Thus, Brazilian women would be prone to use an authoritarian managerial style, because they have to work for and satisfy the expectations of--and ultimately model—supervisors who themselves use authoritarian managerial styles.

The purpose of this paper is to report and discuss the significance of analyses conducted subsequent to Rossi and Todd-Mancillas' earlier work (Note 1). That earlier work was based on Barzilian interviewee responses to two manager-employee

conflict scenarios. Two additional manager-employee conflict scenarios are analyzed in this paper.

Procedures

Interviewees

All 80 managers (40 Brazilian men, 40 Brazilian women) participating in this study worked in middle and top-management positions. All of them lived and work in Porto Alegre, an economically progressive coastal city.

Data Collection Procedure

Each manager was asked to read a packet of four scripts describing various problems that a manager might have with an employee or another manager of equal status as themself. Each of these scripts described critical incidents validated by previous research as personnel problems frequently encountered by managers (Rossi & Wolesensky, 1983). While these scripts were initially constructed on the basis of interviews conducted with American managers (Wolesensky, Note 2), they are also representative of personnel problems encountered by Brazilian managers.

Script A describes an instance in which an employee expresses reluctance to do an assigned task not included in his/her job description (see Appendix A). Script B describes an instance in which an employee violates (apparently inadvertently) the established chain of command (see Appendix B). Script C involves

a dispute in which an employee challenges the manager's competence to give correct instructions on how to do an assigned task (see Appendix D). Script D is different from the others in that it involves a dispute between a newly hired high-level employee and other high-level employees (managers), who challenge the former's authority to introduce a change in termination policy (see Appendix D). Further, Script D contains sufficient ambiguity to make less than clear whether the newly hired high-level employee has the authority to impose changes in personnel policy on the managers.

Four versions of each script were utilized, matching all possible combinations of men and women managers with male and female employees. After reading the scripts, respondents were interviewed to determine how they would resolve the problems.

Coding Procedures

Using a previously established and validated coding procedure (Rossi & Todd-Mancillas, 1985a), the responses were read and assigned to one of three classifications. Responses were assigned a Communication classification if they indicated that the primary means of resolving the dispute was through discussion with the employee, which—to a significant extent—reflected objective consideration of the employee's perspective and used neither

coercion nor threat, but rather nonmanipulative persuasion in obtaining compliance (see Appendix E).

Responses were assigned an Organizational Power classification if they indicated that the employee would be forced to follow the manager's directives (or sanctioned for presumably not having followed them in the first place). Usually, responses received organization power classifications for one of two reasons: (a) the respondent made an explicit comment to the effect that the employee would be reprimanded or threatened with dismissal; (b) the respondent did not imply in any way that she would consider objectively the employee's reasons for objecting to or possibly having inadvertently violated the managerial directive in question (see Appendix E).

Lastly, responses were assigned a Mixed Approach classification if they included both an indication to discuss objectively the problem with the employee, coupled with either an implicit or explicit threat of sanction should the employee refuse to comply with the manager's directives (see Appendix E).

Data Analysis Procedures

In an earlier paper (Rossi & Todd-Mancillas, Note 1), interviewee responses to Scripts A and B were analyzed. As indicated in this paper's introduction, these analyses seemed to indicate that Brazilian men and women managers are more similar

than dissimilar to one another in their preference for using power when resolving disputes with employees, and further, that this similarity contrasts in an interesting way with differences found between American men and women managers, with American women managers reporting significantly greater preference for resolving disputes through communication and negotiation.

The present data analysis is confined to interviewee responses to Scripts C and D, and complement previously reported findings based on Scripts A and B.

After the responses were coded into communication, organizational power, and mixed approach categories, 2 X 3 contingency tables were constructed, preliminary to the analysis of the data using X^2 tests. Then, 2 X 3 X^2 tests were conducted separately for men and women managers to determine whether they responded differently to male employees than to female employees (see Tables 1, 2, 5 and 6). If both tests were found nonsignificant and, therefore, it appeared that men and women managers responded similarly to male and female employees, the data for male and female employees were combined and a X^2 test was then conducted to determine whether men managers differed from women managers in their overall response styles (see Table 3). If it appeared that men and women managers did not differ in their response profiles, then the data were combined and a one-way (1 X 3) X^2 test was

conducted to determine whether one response type was preferred over the others (see Table 4). In general, significant X^2 tests were followed by simpler X^2 tests to tease out the conceptually meaningful relationships attributable to managerial gender, response style, and gender of employee.

All X^2 tests were considered significant if the obtained X^2 exceeded 5.99 the critical X^2 needed at the .05 level of significance, with df = 2 (Siegel, 1956).

Results

Script C: Employee Challenges Brazilian Manager's Competence to Give Correct Instructions on How to do an Assigned Task

Analysis of the data indicated that: neither men nor women managers reported any significant tendency to treat male employees differently from female employees (see Tables 1 and 2); men and women managers did not differ significantly from one another in the ways in which they would attempt to resolve disputes with employees challenging their competence (see Table 3); both men and women managers reported an overwhelming preference for using power (sanctions and dismissal) when resolving disputes with employees challenging their competence (see Table 4).

Script D: High-Level Employee's Authority is Challenged by Other High-Level Employees (Managers)

Analysis of the data indicated that Brazilian women managers seemed to respond no differently to male versus female high-level

employees (see Table 5), nor did they report a significant preference for using one response style over others (see Table 8). However, Brazilian male managers reported a significant preference for responding differently to male versus female high-level employees (see Table 7). Specifically, men reported a signficant preference for using communication (or communication combined with power) to resolve disputes with male high-level employees, but power when resolving disputes with female high-level employees.

Discussion

There appears, then, considerable similarity between Brazilian men and women managers when resolving disputes with employees who have explicitly challenged their competence (Script C). As with American men and women managers (Todd-Mancillas & Rossi, 1985), Brazilian men and women managers respond forcefully and negatively to employees challenging their competence.

There appear, however, to be interesting gender-by-culture differences in the ways in which American and Brazilian managers attempt to resolve disputes with other high-level employees. Whereas American men and women managers both report a preference for using communication to resolve such dispsutes—regardless of whether the disputant is a man or woman—Brazilian men managers respond quite differently from Brazilian women managers. Specifically, Brazilian women managers reported no significant

preference for using communication, power, or some combination thereof when resolving disputes with other high-level employees, nor did the gender of the disputant appear to have any significant influence on their intended behavior.

Quite different results were obtained for Brazilian men managers. The gender of the disputant appears to have influenced significantly the course of action intended by Brazilian men managers. Specifically, Brazilian men managers were more prone to use communciation (negotiation) to resolve disputes with other high-level male employees, but power (negative sanctions) when resolving disputes with high-level female employees.

Thus, it appears Brazilian men and women managers are similar to American managers in using power to resolve disputes with employees explicitly challenging their authority (Script C). From this one would conclude that an explicit challenge to one's authority is viewed by men and women managers from both cultures as sufficient reason to sanction, possibly even terminate troublesome employees. However, that Brazilian men managers would be similarly inclined to use power to resolve disputes with high-level female employees, but not so with high-level male employees, points to an interesting contrast between Brazilian and American men managers, one that should be explored further. Possibly, machismo norms dictate that when a Brazilian male manager is challenged by a

woman—not withstanding a woman of comparable authority as self—he suffers different and possibly more painful threat and stress than what he experiences when challenged by another man. To protect himself against this particularly serious threat, he attempts to use power (i.e., organizational structure and sanctions) to neutralize and punish the source of that embarrassment, the disputant female colleague.

Such an interpretation is compatible with the machismo literature, especially that literature concerning prescribed and proscribed relationships between men and women. Clearly, machismo norms guard against the intrusion of women into positions of authority, which would in any way assign men lesser status than women. The upshot of this study's findings is that among Brazilian managerial-equals, clearly the men managers are "more equal" than the women managers. Since no similar distinction has been found when an identical study was done with American men and women managers (Todd-Mancillas & Rossi, 1985), it is reasonable to conclude that culture is indeed a powerful force affecting managerial communication behavior.

The authors are currently planning investigations determining whether these findings apply to other cultures: Mexico, which would constitute a replication of the Brazilian study reported here, the Republic of China, and India. Only after replications

are attempted in other cultures will we then have a more complete understanding of cross-cultural differences in managerial communication behavior.

Appendix A

(Script A)

Employee Reluctantly Complies With Manager's Order To Do Task Not Included In Current Job Description

Marge (Mario) is the supervisor of several employees in the stock room at an organization. Just recently, the position of inventory control clerk was eliminated. Marge's employees are now responsible for controlling and monitoring the amount of inventory on hand. Marge says, "When an order came in, I assigned the task of doing the inventory work to one of the clerks. She appeared angry, but did do the inventory control work. I found out later, via the grapevine, that the clerk felt she should not have had to do the inventorying. She felt that it was my responsibility to do it with her. The communication problem in this situation was persuading her, after the fact, that it was now her responsibility to inventory the stock she unpacked. I was met with lots of resistance, because it was her expectation that this was my responsibility and vice versa."

Maria (Mario) supervisiona diversos functionarios no setor de estoque de uma companhia. Recentemente, a posicao de empregado que fazia o balanco de mercadorias foi eliminada na companhia. Agora os empregados de Maria sao responsaveis pelo con trole e balanco do estoque. Maria diz que "quando recebemos um carregamento, eu

solicitei a uma das functionariea para fazer o balanco das mercadorias. Ela fi cou braba, mas terminou por fazer. Descobri mais tarde, atraves de boato no escritorio, que a functionaira disse que nao deveria ser obrigada a fazer o ba lanco, pois acreditava que isto era minha responsabilidade. O problema nesta situacao foi o de persuadi-la, depois do fato ter ocorrido, de que de agora em diante ela seria responsavel pelo balanco das mercadorias. Encontrei muita resistencia de sua parte, pois ela achava que era minha obrigacao fazer o balanco e vice-versa."

Appendix B

(Script B)

Employee Goes Beyond Boundaries Of Authority

And Violates Chain Of Command

Jean (Joseph) is the supervisor of a senior clerk and several entry-level clerks in an organization, but she and the senior clerk have experienced difficulties in defining the boundaries of authority in the department. "For example, Jean says, "She had been given responsibility for calculating the statistics of a report that is published by another department. When he encountered an error in some of this data, rather than coming to me with it, he went to the other department manager. This angered the other manager, since he felt that my subordinate should have checked with me before coming to him. I also felt that this was the case, so it was very difficult for me to support my subordinate when the angered department manager contacted me to complain about my senior clerk's "uppity" behavior. If he (the senior clerk) had just come to me first, we could have gone together to the department manager, and none of the anger would have occurred, and lots of time would have been saved in clarifying the error."

Nara (Nilo) supervisiona um datilografo e varios outros funcionarios em uma companhia. Entretanto, ela e o datilografo tiveram alguma dificuldade em estabelecer o parametro de autoridade

do datilografo no departamento. "Por exemplo", disse Nara, "o datilografo era responsavel pelo calculo de um relatorio estatistico que era publicado por um outro departamento. Quando encontrou um erro nos dados fornecidos pelo outro departamento, em vez de me comunicar sobre itsto, foi dire to ao supervisor do outro departamento. O supervisor ficou irritado, pois acha va que meu funcionario deveria ter me consultado antes. Eu tambem achei que o funcionario nao agiu corretamente e por isso foi dificil para mim dar-lhe apoio quando o outro supervisor veio reclamar. Se meu datilografo tivesse me consultado, nos teriamos ido juntos falar com o supervisor e assim nade disto teria ocorrido e nos teriamos poupado tempo e energia, esclarecendo a atitude do datilografo."

Appendix C

(Script C)

Employee Challenges Manager's Competence To Give Correct Instructions On How To Do An Assigned Task

Kathy (Ken) was hired by a local company not only to manage the office, but also to check the accuracy of the work being done by the employees. In this capacity, she not only instructs people in the office about how certain procedures are to be carried out, but also is responsible for giving them feedback when they make mistakes. One of the female employees in the office repeatedly made the same mistake in completing a form. When Kathy went to her, for the third time, to explain how the form was to be completed, she "told me that she didn't think I was right. She suggested that I call the head office and make sure that my instructions were correct. I walked away knowing that I was right, but I called the office anyway. As I suspected, I was right. Only after she had seen me call the head office and get their confirmation did she accept the fact that she was doing something wrong and that my suggestions were right. My feedback alone was not enough, though."

Lisa (Luis) foi admitida em uma companhia local nao apenas para chefiar o escritorio, como tambem para checar a precisao do trabalho executado pelos empregados. Nes te sentido, tinha que

irstruir os functionarios dequele setor sobre a maneier co mo certos procedimentos deveriam ser executados a fazer comentarios quando encontrasse erros. Um fancionario no escritorio, continuamente, cometia o mesmo erro ao completar um formulario. Quando Lisa o abordou pela terceira vez para emplicar como o formulario deveria ser preenchido, o empregado disse que "ele achava que eu estava e-rada e sugeriu que eu chamasse o escritorio centarl para confirmar minha informacao. Afastei-me do functionario, sabendo que estava cor reta, mas chamei o escritorio de qualquer maneira para satisfaze-lo. Como acha va, eu estava correta. Apenas depois de presenciar meu telefonema e que o fun cionario admitiu estar errado. Portanto, minha instrucac por si so nao foi su ficiente para convence-lo a preencher o formulario como eu estava dizendo."

Table 1 (Script C)

Women Managers Response Style

	Communication	Power	Mixed
Male Employees	2	13	5
Female Employees	0	15	5

$X^2 = 1.14$.

Table 2 (Script C)

Men Managers Response Style

	Communication	Power	Mixed
Male Employees	2	15	3
Female Employees	2	16	2

Note. Because expected frequencies were less than 5 for greater than 20 percent of the cells, it was not appropriate to compute X^2 (Siegel, 1956). However, it is apparent from inspecting the table that new managers did not respond differently to male than female employees.

Table 3 (Script C)

Brazilian Women Managers Contrasted With Brazilian Men Managers Response Style

	Communication	Power	Mixed
Women Managers	2	28	10
Men Managers	4	31	5

$X^2 = 2.49$.

Table 4 (Script C)

Data From Brazilian Women and Men Managers Combined Response Style

	Communication	Power	Mixed
Women and Men Managers	6	59	15

$X^2 = 60.32$.

Appendix D

(Script D)

High-Level Employee's Authority Is Challenged

By Other High-Level Employees (Managers)

Jane (John) was hired by her employer to develop personnel policies and procedures. The organization had tripled in size since its creation, and the need for someone in this capacity was apparent to her employer. As Jane familiarized herself with the organization, she realized the need for reports which specified a supervisor's reason(s) for terminating an employee. All of the supervisors in the organization were men. They reacted to Jane's procedure by telling her that the forms were unnecessary, and since they hadn't done this type of reporting before, why did they need to now. Jane said, "I had to persuade them of the importance of this type of documentation. Two of the supervisors even went to my boss and asked about the necessity of such reports. It was fortunate that my boss endorsed me. However, a great deal of time was wasted in persuading the supervisors. I felt as if I had to defend not only the credibility of the reporting, but also my credibility."

Jane (Juca) foi admitida por seu patrao para desenvolver procedimentos a normas involvendo problemas de demissao no departamento de pessoal. A companhia em que trabalhava havia

triplicado em tamanho desde sua criacao e a necessidade de re-organizacao nesta area era aparente ao empregador. Enquanto sJane se familiarizava com os procedimentos e normas em vigor na companhia, ela se deu conta da necessidade de relatorios especificiando a razao ou razoes para demis sao de functionarios. Os gerentes da companhia reagiram as modificacoes sugeridas por Jane dizendo que os formularios que ela queria implementar nao eram necessarios e, como eles nunca precisaram preencher tais formularios an tes, nao vinham qualquer razao papa faze-lo agora. Jane disse, "eu tive que persuadir aqueles gerentes da necessidade deste tipo de documentacao. Dois dos gerentes inclusive forma perguntar ao meu patrao sobre a necessidade de tais formularios. Felizmente, meu patrao me deu apoio. Entretanto, muito tempo foi disperdicado persuadindo os gerentes. Neste caso, tive qu defen der nao apenas a credibilidade dos formularios, como tambem minha propria cre dibilidade."

Table 5 (Script D)

Women Managers Response Style

	Communication	Power	Mixed
Male Managers	8	7	5
Female Managers	11	7	2

$X^2 = .96.$

Table 6 (Script D)

Men Managers Response Style

	Communication	Power	Mixed
Male Managers	12	6	2
Female Managers	1	16	3

Note. Because expected frequencies were less than 5 for greater than 20 percent of the cells, it was not appropriate to compute X^2 for this contingency table (Siegel, 1956). However, mere inspection of the table indicates that men managers were far more likely to communicate with other male managers than with female managers. By collapsing the Communication and Mixed categories together, a 2 X 2 contingency table was constructed and an appropriate X^2 computed (see Table 7). Indeed, the resulting $X^2 = 10.10$ indicates Brazilian men managers were significantly more likely to use communication when resolving disputes with high-level male employees, but power when resolving disputes with high-level female employees.

Table 7 (Script D)

Men Managers Response Style

	Communication or Mixed	Power
Male Managers	14	6
Female Managers	4	16

$X^2 = 10.10$

Table 8 (Script D)

Brazilian Women Managers Response Style

	Communication	Power	Mixed
Male & Female Employees	19	14	7

$X^2 = 5.44.$

Appendix E

Example of Communication as the Predominate Response Mode

Female Manager

I'd involve all supervisors in my decision so it would be easier to persuade them about the need for change.

Male Manager

I'd involve the other supervisors in my decision. It'd take longer, but in the long run we would save time.

Example of Communication as the Predominate Response Mode

Female Manager

I'd be very angry with my clerk. I'd take him to the other manager to explain himself and would warn him about similar situations in the future.

Male Manager

I'd apologize to the other manager and terminate the clerk. I'd ask that a memo would be sent out to all employees clarifying the lines of communication in the organization.

Examples of Combined Use of Power and Communication as Predominate Response Mode

Female Manager

I'd explain the situation to my employees and I'd try to find

a volunteer to do the job. If I couldn't find a volunteer I'd choose someone everytime the task had to be done.

Male Manager

I'd inform the employee of her new duty and would emphasize her qualities to perform the job.

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